United Nations E/2015/SR.33

Economic and Social Council

15 September 2015

Original: English

2015 session
21 July 2014-22 July 2015
Third coordination and management meeting

Summary record of the 33rd meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Tuesday, 9 June 2015, at 10 a.m.

President: Mr. Drobnjak (Vice-President) ..... (Croatia)

Contents

Coordination, programme and other questions (*continued*)

(f) Prevention and control of non-communicable diseases

Implementation of and follow-up to major United Nations conferences and summits

(a) Follow-up to the International Conference on Financing for Development*

Economic and environmental questions (*continued*)

(h) International cooperation in tax matters*

United Nations research and training institutes

Economic and environmental questions (*continued*)

(m) Assistance to third States affected by the application of sanctions

* Items which the Council has decided to consider together.

This record is subject to correction.

Corrections should be submitted in one of the working languages. They should be set forth in a memorandum and also incorporated in a copy of the record. They should be sent as soon as possible to the Chief of the Documents Control Unit (srcorrections@un.org).

Corrected records will be reissued electronically on the Official Document System of the United Nations (http://documents.un.org/).

15-09294 (E)

Please recycle

In the absence of Mr. Sajdik (Austria), Mr. Drobnjak (Croatia), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Coordination, programme and other questions (*continued*)

(f) Prevention and control of non-communicable diseases (E/2015/53 and E/2015/L.14)

1. **Ms. Menabde** (World Health Organization), introducing the report of the Director-General of the World Health Organization on the United Nations Inter-Agency Task Force on the Prevention and Control of Non-communicable Diseases (E/2015/53), said that, between June 2014 and June 2015, the work of the Task Force had been directed towards the implementation of the six objectives set out in its terms of reference. In particular, it had focused on strengthening the capacities of United Nations country teams to prevent and control non-communicable diseases, including through joint programming missions. The Task Force had conducted missions to Belarus, India, Kenya and Tonga during the reporting period, and, after the submission of the report, to Barbados. Participants in the missions had included the heads of the resident organizations of the United Nations system, supported by senior representatives from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the World Bank and the World Health Organization (WHO). In addition, many WHO offices at the country level had worked closely with United Nations country teams to scale up national responses to non-communicable diseases and increase access to interventions that would reduce risk factors and enable health systems in those countries to respond adequately to the challenges posed by those diseases.

2. In February 2015, UNDP and WHO had issued a guidance note on the integration of non-communicable diseases into the United Nations Development Assistance Framework. It highlighted the importance of ensuring that linkages were made between the prevention and control of non-communicable diseases and broader development issues, such as universal health coverage, social protection, governance and social determinants of health. It also highlighted linkages with other sectors, including finance, trade, importance of engaging with all parts of Government and society.

3. Selected members of the Task Force were developing joint programmes for action at the country level in accordance with the UNDP guidance note on joint programmes in order to mobilize resources for the prevention and control of cancer and strengthen national and subnational governance for non-communicable diseases. The design of those programmes built on the experience gained through the Be He@lthy, Be Mobile joint programme of WHO and the International Telecommunication Union, which had been launched in eight countries. The Task Force acknowledged the special focus on tobacco control within its mandate and members remained committed to duly addressing and prioritizing that issue. Activities had been carried out to help Governments strengthen national coordination in that area, advance ratification of the Protocol to Eliminate Illicit Trade in Tobacco Products, develop policy recommendations for economically sustainable alternatives to tobacco growing, reduce trade in tobacco, establish knowledge hubs and promote South-South cooperation.

4. Many Task Force members had started to align their policies and resources to support the objectives of the Task Force, and sizeable gains had occurred even in the smallest programmes. The Task Force had demonstrated great power in promoting collective action and faster results in preventing and controlling non-communicable diseases. However, progress in meeting the demand for technical assistance from developing countries to set national targets for 2025; in developing national multisectoral policies and plans on non-communicable diseases to achieve the national targets by 2025; and in strengthening national capacities to assess progress and monitor results had been insufficient and highly uneven among United Nations country teams. Bolder measures were needed to accelerate efforts to equip country teams with the knowledge and expertise to support national efforts to address non-communicable diseases and mitigate their negative impact.

Draft resolution E/2015/L.14: United Nations Inter-Agency Task Force on the Prevention and Control of Non-communicable Diseases

5. **Mr. Maksimychev** (Russian Federation), introducing draft resolution E/2015/L.14, said that Angola, Armenia, China, Iceland, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Jamaica, Japan, Kazakhstan, Monaco,

Nepal, Panama, Serbia and Tunisia had joined the sponsors of the draft resolution.

6. The international community had made significant progress towards combating non-communicable diseases, including through the adoption of global goals and the establishment of a monitoring system for their achievement. The main objective of the draft resolution was to add fresh impetus to multilateral cooperation in combating non-communicable diseases and to the work of the United Nations Inter-Agency Task Force on the Prevention and Control of Non-communicable Diseases. It would facilitate achievement of the Global Action Plan for the Prevention and Control of Non-communicable Diseases 2013-2020 and support implementation of the goals contained in the 2011 Political Declaration of the High-level Meeting of the General Assembly on the Prevention and Control of Non-communicable Diseases and the 2014 outcome document of the high-level meeting of the General Assembly on the comprehensive review and assessment of the progress achieved in the prevention and control of non-communicable diseases.

7. **The President** said that the draft resolution had no programme budget implications and recalled that it had been issued only that morning. He took that it the Council wished to waive rule 54 of the rules of procedure in order not to delay its adoption.

8. *It was so decided.*

9. *Draft resolution E/2015/L.14 was adopted.*

Implementation of and follow-up to major United Nations conferences and summits

(a) Follow-up to the International Conference on Financing for Development (A/70/85-E/2015/77)

Economic and environmental questions (*continued*)

(h) International cooperation in tax matters (E/2014/45; E/2015/L.9 and E/2015/L.12)

10. **Mr. Mminele** (South Africa), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that the Council's deliberations should be based on the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and should take into account different economic realities. Work at the United Nations should also respect national policy space and correspond with national priorities.

11. The co-facilitators of the financing for development process had shown themselves keen to complete the drafting of the outcome document of the third International Conference on Financing for Development within the agreed time frame, and the Group and its development partners were committed to achieving that goal. Steps should be taken to mobilize the highest level of political participation for that Conference, which would be held in Addis Ababa from 13 to 16 July 2015.

12. The outcome document should result in quality deliverables that made the purpose of the meeting clear. In particular, the document should resemble the Monterrey Consensus and the Doha Declaration in terms of scope and structure, and the headings and subheadings should reflect the fact that the Conference was on financing for development. The traditional definition of official development assistance should be maintained and the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities should be observed. Financing for development must be kept separate from the sustainable development goals and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change; in that regard, climate finance should not be included in the financing for development process. The Group was committed to ensuring an ambitious outcome that suited the interests of all Member States and focused on poverty eradication.

13. Tax systems played a key role in development and a global, inclusive norm-setting body was needed to strengthen international tax cooperation at the intergovernmental level. The Group had repeatedly called for the Committee of Experts on International Cooperation in Tax Matters to be upgraded to an intergovernmental body of the Council, in order to allow all Member States, including developing countries, to have an equal say on tax matters and to enable the Committee of Experts to contribute effectively to the financing for development and post-2015 development agenda processes. The Group urged the Council to act on that issue speedily to make the global discourse on tax matters transparent and inclusive.

14. The Group welcomed the updating of the United Nations Model Double Taxation Convention between Developed and Developing Countries and the completion of the United Nations Transfer Pricing Practical Manual for Developing Countries. The Committee of Experts had also done good work in the area of capacity-building on international tax matters though there was still scope for improvement. The United Nations played an important role in international

cooperation on tax matters but national sovereignty must be respected and there should be no interference from external actors in tax matters that fell within the remit of national Governments. In particular, tax revenues were not a replacement for official development assistance. Official development assistance represented the major source of financing for the development of many developing countries and must target the eradication of poverty in its multiple dimensions. Unfulfilled official development assistance commitments under the Millennium Development Goals should be carried forward and the impact of the official development assistance deficit should be urgently assessed as part of the review of the implementation of the Monterrey Consensus and Doha Declaration.

15. The Group urged Member States to move towards resolving the current impasse in tax matters. Work on tax matters should reflect a commitment to operate within the confines of the revitalized global partnership for sustainable development.

Draft resolution E/2015/L.9: Committee of Experts on International Cooperation in Tax Matters

16. **Mr. Mminele** (South Africa), introducing draft resolution E/2015/L.9 on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that the draft resolution called for the Committee of Experts on International Cooperation in Tax Matters to be upgraded to an intergovernmental subsidiary body of the Council. However, action on the draft resolution would not be taken until after the third International Conference on Financing for Development.

17. **The President** said that the Council would take action on draft resolution E/2015/L.9 at a later date.

Draft decision E/2015/L.12: Venue and dates of and provisional agenda for the eleventh session of the Committee of Experts on International Cooperation in Tax Matters

18. **The President** said that the draft decision contained no programme budget implications.

19. *Draft decision E/2015/L.12 was adopted.*

United Nations research and training institutes
(A/70/79-E/2015/70; E/2015/7, E/2015/12 and E/2015/54; E/2015/L.10)

20. **Mr. Javan** (United Nations System Staff College), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations System Staff College (E/2015/54), said that the College provided system-wide knowledge management and training for the staff of the United Nations system with the strategic objective of better equipping them to deliver as one. Training and learning should be at the heart of any strategy developed to ensure that the United Nations was fit to respond to the global challenges ahead.

21. During the period under review, the courses, workshops and knowledge products of the College had equipped some 25,000 United Nations staff with the knowledge and tools to work towards the common goal of making the United Nations more coherent, efficient and effective. That figure represented an increase of 23 per cent over the previous biennium. To enhance the relevance of its courses, the College collaborated with experts, academic institutions, private sector entities and United Nations partners. It had identified priority areas of learning intervention and had expanded its portfolio of courses to respond to the far-reaching reform agenda of the United Nations system. It had also strengthened its ability to systematically review its offerings. It had achieved all those results despite being a small entity that generated 75 per cent of its income from fees and contracts for services.

22. Strengthening leadership capacity across the system remained a principal mission of the College. Vision, courage and a focused skill set in the senior leadership were imperative to drive the change that the United Nations urgently needed and to effectively overcome obstacles and resistance. To successfully deliver as one, leadership must be inspired by a sense of belonging to something greater than its own entity and be equipped to create an environment in which staff members felt empowered to take reasonable risks to promote United Nations values and principles. In the reporting period, the College had supported over 450 United Nations senior managers in refining and aligning their leadership approaches, and it now offered a comprehensive "United Nations leadership pathway" with a portfolio of courses for staff at the mid-career level (P-3 and P-4) and the senior executive level (Under-Secretary-General and Assistant Secretary-General). In addition, the College had delivered more than 40 strategic prioritization retreats for United Nations country teams around the world, attended by at least 2,413 participants, with the sponsorship of the Development Operations Coordination Office. Through the retreats, country teams and their counterparts had

prepared country development strategies with a focus on system-wide programming and delivery.

23. To increase the capacity of staff to implement the forthcoming sustainable development agenda, the College had developed new courses and tools on partnership building and development cooperation in middle-income countries. It was working to devise a learning strategy for resident coordinators on human rights and, jointly with the United Nations Institute for Training and Research, was preparing national sustainable development training workshops for United Nations country teams and national actors. In addition, it was expanding its online post-2015 learning hub, which allowed United Nations staff to access information on post-2015 issues.

24. Given the increasing challenges in peace and security, the College had broadened its portfolio of courses on conflict analysis and prevention, decentralization and peacebuilding. It was also expanding its partnership with the United Nations Department of Safety and Security to address the growing risks faced by United Nations staff in the field. In other areas, the College had developed new courses on essential skills for United Nations staff at all levels and feedback from participants had been positive. United Nations staff must be equipped with adequate knowledge, tools and innovative capacity to make a real difference in saving and improving lives and maintaining the comparative advantage of the system.

25. Concerning future plans, the College was working to increase its ability to spread the vast knowledge generated by the United Nations system and to create forums for staff to engage in strategic thinking on urgent challenges. It would foster networks of committed staff capable of concerted action to assess and implement system-wide reforms and promote positive change. United Nations partners should consider the College as the first port of call for their learning and training needs and should sponsor ongoing staff participation. Member States should continue to support the College as it aimed to build a comprehensive portfolio of programmes designed to drive organizational change and contribute to the long-term sustainability of the Organization.

26. No other entity was mandated to provide a platform for system-wide knowledge-sharing. The success of the Organization in overcoming future challenges would be determined not only by policy but also by the ability and willingness of the United Nations to become a learning organization. To that end, the College was working to drive change management, although there remained much to be done.

27. **Ms. Caeymaex** (United Nations University), introducing the report of the Council of the United Nations University on the work of the University (E/2015/7), said that the University was a solution-focused think-tank and research organization whose mission was to contribute to efforts to resolve the pressing global problems of human survival, development and welfare by providing reliable evidence for policy development. It worked closely with Member States to identify research needs and to help develop the knowledge to address them. The University received no funds from the regular United Nations budget and relied on contributions from host Governments, agencies, international organizations and other sources, as well as investment income from its endowment fund. In 2014, the University had received $46.9 million in contributions from 22 Governments and some 112 other sources.

28. Since 1975, the University had grown to a global network of research and training institutes with a staff of 479 and an annual budget of more than $65 million. In 2014, the University had implemented 178 research projects, most of which had been focused on or in developing countries. The areas covered included modern slavery, violent extremism and climate change. In the same year, the University website had received more than 6.77 million page views.

29. The University was implementing institutional changes to become more responsive to the needs of the United Nations and its Member States and to enhance its research on intergovernmental deliberations and policy, with a more specific focus on identifying practical solutions to real problems and translating those findings into knowledge that could contribute to important policy debates within the United Nations system.

30. Institutional developments included the formation of the United Nations University Institute for the Advanced Study of Sustainability, which focused its research on high-level policymaking in the areas of sustainability science, biodiversity and environmental governance. In addition, the United Nations University Centre for Policy Research had been established in Tokyo in 2014 as part of the University's efforts to enhance its policy relevance in the fields of peace and

security and global development. The core mission of the Centre was to generate policy research that was relevant to major debates in the wider United Nations community. The Centre had already contributed to several major ongoing policy processes in the United Nations, including the Council's dialogue on the longer-term positioning of the United Nations development system. It had also organized a major panel on climate economics at the Climate Summit 2014.

31. The University had adopted a new University-wide strategic plan for 2015-2019, which contained four key organizational priorities: ensuring management excellence at all levels; sustainable growth; streamlining of partnerships; and restructuring of teaching programmes and capacity development.

32. **Ms. Fegan-Wyles** (United Nations Institute for Training and Research), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (E/2015/12), said that the Institute's mission was to strengthen the capacities of the citizens of Member States through targeted training and research on knowledge systems, with priority given to developing countries. Adult education was provided to government delegates engaged in multilateral processes to establish norms, policies and programmes on the issues addressed by the United Nations, key change agents who were working to translate those agreements into concrete action at the country level, and other stakeholders.

33. Since 2014, the Institute had been working under its new four-year strategic framework to strengthen multilateralism, promote economic development and social inclusion, advance environmental sustainability and green growth, promote sustainable peace, and improve resilience and humanitarian response. Over the previous year it had provided training for more than 36,000 beneficiaries, including individuals from virtually all Member States, which represented an increase of 54 per cent compared with 2013. Notwithstanding that increase, income had remained stable, reflecting the continued expansion of training through e-learning, which was a cost-effective way of providing knowledge to large numbers of people. However, face-to-face training also remained very important, given the limited use of e-learning in the development of more sophisticated analytical skills.

34. In 2014, the Institute, with support from the Governments of Algeria and Sweden, had waived the course fees for more than 250 delegates as part of its efforts to strengthen multilateralism and level the playing field between developed country and developing country delegations in New York and Geneva. It had also provided interactive technical briefings designed to ensure that delegates had easy access to the knowledge they needed to reach agreement on the post-2015 development agenda. To promote economic development and social inclusion, the Institute had launched initiatives to encourage investment in Africa and youth employability in Algeria and Nigeria. In addition, it continued to expand its network of affiliated training centres for effective management of resources by local actors, having opened new centres in Quito and San Salvador.

35. The Institute continued to contribute to building human and institutional capacities to overcome critical environmental challenges and promote low-carbon growth. To that end, working with its partners, it had launched a follow-up phase of the One United Nations Climate Change Learning Partnership, with the inclusion of additional countries and the launch of a free online course on climate change. It had also scaled up its green economy programming, as well as its programming in the area of chemicals and waste management, with country projects designed to accelerate ratification of the Minamata Convention on Mercury.

36. To promote sustainable peace, the Institute had strengthened its high-level engagement activities with Member States and the United Nations, and was working with representatives of African States on the Security Council, together with the Chair of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union and senior officials of the African Union Commission, to develop a common vision and policies on peace and security in Africa. It had also launched an online international Master's degree in conflictology in collaboration with the Open University of Catalonia, which was aimed at the staff of United Nations peacekeeping missions.

37. The Institute was working to improve resilience and humanitarian response through its Operational Satellite Applications Programme (UNOSAT), which, in 2014, had produced maps and reports on natural disasters and humanitarian crises, as well as damage assessments. The Institute had also led two projects designed to build the capacities of Governments and organizations in the use of geographic information systems.

38. In addition to its programmatic areas, the Institute was working to strengthen its managing for results, performance measurement and evaluation frameworks and practices. Beneficiary reaction to courses provided by the Institute remained very positive.

39. The Institute was entirely voluntary funded but, despite the difficult economic environment, its income remained stable. Progress had been made in reversing the downtrend in non-earmarked contributions to the General Fund, thanks largely to a generous contribution from the Government of Algeria. The Institute had also implemented a new cost recovery model which differentiated between indirect and direct support costs. That approach had increased transparency with donors and had proved effective in covering the costs of the Institute's essential leadership, oversight and support functions.

40. **Mr. Won-soo** (Special Adviser to the Secretary-General), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on the consultations on research, training and library services (A/70/79-E/2015/70), said that the Council had requested the Secretary-General to develop a proposal on how to enhance collaboration among the seven United Nations entities dedicated to research, training and library services. Over the previous two years, extensive consultations had been held with the entities concerned and with Member States concerning the proposed consolidation of some of the entities, including the United Nations Institute for Training and Research. Several serious obstacles to the proposed consolidation had been identified both by the entities themselves and through intergovernmental processes, and it had been concluded that it would be better to pursue synergies through voluntary collaboration. As a result, the existing legal status, mandates and governance structures of the entities involved would be respected and no proposals involving structural changes or budgetary implications would be made. In addition, any steps to be taken would remain subject to the full scrutiny and approval of the respective boards.

41. In the area of training, the United Nations System Staff College and the United Nations Institute for Training and Research, as the two largest training entities, would work together more closely, through their respective governing bodies, to identify and implement initiatives that would improve the quality and impact of their respective activities. In addition, an advisory group would be established to bring together the major learning and training providers in the United Nations system to ensure greater alignment between supply and demand, increase mutual use of their respective services and reduce transaction costs by making greater use of outside providers to provide training for United Nations staff and representatives of Member States.

42. Many different parts of the United Nations Secretariat and the United Nations system were involved in research activities, including the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development, the United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute and the United Nations Institute for Training and Research; relevant research also existed outside the United Nations system. The United Nations University, which had the widest research network, would lead work to connect all the various research activities in support of the new development agenda. It had been decided not to include the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research in the voluntary collaboration model for the time being, given that it was entirely focused on the disarmament research agenda, which was not covered by the post-2015 development agenda.

43. It was widely recognized by Member States that there was a need to bring together the core functions of the two largest libraries in the Secretariat, the Dag Hammarskjöld Library in New York and the Library of the United Nations Office at Geneva, to avoid duplication and achieve synergies, although the two libraries also carried out activities that were unique to each location. A small internal libraries board would be established to examine ways to enhance collaboration between the two libraries, not only with regard to traditional library functions but also in new areas emerging with the greater use of information technology. The synergies achieved would also enable the United Nations system to tap into the capacities of smaller libraries on all five continents.

44. It was important to ensure overall coherence in training, research and library services, and all senior managers needed to consider the coordination of those three functions. To that end, an internal knowledge and learning steering committee would be established to foster a more holistic approach. Some steps had already been taken under the voluntary collaboration model, including the organization of an internal meeting to develop terms of reference for the advisory group on learning and training. In carrying out the next

steps it was important to ensure that internal accountability was standardized among the entities, since the lack of standard mechanisms across entities had in the past led to problems.

45. **Mr. Lambertini** (Italy) said that the emergence of the new post-2015 development agenda and a rapidly evolving global context made access to knowledge and information for key actors more essential than ever. His delegation therefore commended the efforts to enhance coherence and synergies among United Nations entities dedicated to research, training and library services. It also welcomed the work being undertaken to create better alignment between supply and demand in training services in order to increase efficiency in the use of existing in-house resources while limiting the cost of external procurement.

46. Italy hosted the United Nations System Staff College and devoted considerable resources to its development. The achievements made by the College, despite its lean organizational structure, were to be welcomed. The College played a unique role as a true inter-agency training provider specifically mandated to bring staff together from different parts of the United Nations system. His delegation therefore encouraged the College to build stronger synergies with other United Nations departments and entities and welcomed its role in the implementation of the Organization's far-reaching reform agenda.

47. Working closely with Member States and multilateral agencies, the College was building a portfolio of learning services that would address the emerging needs of staff in the post-2015 context, and facilitate change management and organizational transformation. Member States should support the College so that it could help the Organization to build capacities and become fit for purpose across all three pillars of its Charter.

48. **Mr. Mminele** (South Africa), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that training and research would be of paramount importance for the post-2015 development agenda. In that regard, the United Nations Institute for Training and Research would play a key role in capacity-building. The Group had confidence in the Institute's New York Office given the positive results of training sessions held at Headquarters. Over the previous four years, the Office had organized some 120 workshops for delegates, nearly 70 per cent of whom had come from the Group of 77 and China. The Group hoped that the understanding and cooperation between itself and the Institute's New York Office would continue to expand. In particular, the courses provided must be in line with the needs and priorities of Member States.

49. **Mr. Eshanta** (Observer for Libya) said that his delegation welcomed the assistance that the United Nations Institute for Training and Research provided, particularly to developing countries, in the form of training and research courses in diplomacy, international cooperation and other fields. The courses and training provided by the Institute would help to build the capacities of delegates and facilitate national capacity-building measures in the areas of development, justice, human rights and conflict resolution and prevention.

50. **Mr. Alsharrah** (Kuwait) said that his delegation welcomed the important role played by the Institute in training and research and commended its efforts in raising awareness of the importance of the post-2015 development agenda. It looked forward to strengthening its cooperation with the New York Office of the Institute, especially in order for Kuwaiti diplomats to enhance their understanding of working methods in the fields of diplomacy, development and economics.

51. **Mr. Djacta** (Observer for Algeria) said that the New York Office of the United Nations Institute for Training and Research should be strengthened so that all delegations could continue to benefit from the services that it provided.

Draft resolution E/2015/L.10: United Nations System Staff College in Turin, Italy

52. **The President** said that the draft resolution had no programme budget implications.

53. **Mr. Dugan** (United States of America) said that the submission of draft resolution E/2015/L.10 underscored the consensus that existed among Member States in support of the continued work of the Staff College. His delegation supported the efforts of the College to promote effectiveness and good change management practices throughout the United Nations system.

54. *Draft resolution E/2015/L.10 was adopted.*

55. **The President** proposed that the Council should take note of the report of the Council of the United Nations University on the work of the University

(E/2015/7), the report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (E/2015/12) and the report of the Secretary-General on the consultations on research, training and library services (A/70/79-E/2015/70).

56. *It was so decided.*

Economic and environmental questions (*continued*)

(m) Assistance to third States affected by the application of sanctions

57. **The President** said that no advance documentation had been submitted under the sub-item and no draft proposal was before the Council.

The meeting rose at 12.00 p.m.